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ABSTRACT

A study examining the competencies, experiences, and skills desired of administrators and counselors of performing and visual arts schools is described in this paper. Survey questionnaires were mailed to administrators and counselors at 189 schools in the United States. A total of 64 surveys were returned. Findings indicate that administrators should have strong management skills, a background in public relations (fund raising), a thorough understanding of the academic needs of the performing arts student, and an involved interest. Counselors should be academically well-trained and be professionally prepared for and have experience with individual student counseling techniques and procedures. (10 references) (SI)

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TIME FOR A CHANGE
THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS SCHOOL

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TIME FOR A CHANGE
THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS SCHOOL

This study was designed to ascertain the competencies, experiences and skills desired of administrators and counselors of Performing and Visual Arts Schools.

The Carnegie Corporation reported on the nation's educational system in 1983 with a NATION AT RISK. The results of this study has been the focal point of the changes that are being made in the education of our youth. In the latest report of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, a program of the Carnegie Corporation, "Turning Point", released June 19, 1989, emphasized that the period from age 10 to 15 is one of extreme vulnerability in large part because of the great physical, social, and emotional changes that occur in adolescence.

One of its many recommendations was the eliminating of tracking by ability and rigid class scheduling and replacing them with cooperative learning in which students work together in small, heterogeneous groups.

Magnet schools attempt to answer the needs the Carnegie Report found to exist by adding to the quality of life (Blank, 1984). Magnet schools do provide high-quality education while offering a choice to students and parents.

One of the purposes of a Performing and Visual Arts magnet school is to enhance student learning in visual/performing arts while maintaining a level of learning in the general curriculum which is consistent with standards expected of high school students generally.

Given the demands (required credits) placed on students by the general curriculum, it appears that little time and effort remain available for significant attention to and accomplishments in the

arts.

Since there is little chance that requirements in the general curriculum will be lowered, or that the total curriculum will be expanded to accommodate studies in the arts, it appears that instruction in the arts must be integrated with the general course of instruction if exemplary learning in the arts is to be forthcoming.

Typically, little attention is paid to the artistic talents of teachers who are employed to teach the general curriculum. Knowledge in one academic area, such as history or mathematics, is the primary criterion.

In a Performing and Visual Arts magnet school it would seem desirable to employ teachers who could incorporate, for example, music theory into a unit of study in literature/English or oil painting into a unit in American/European history.

Similarly, it would seem desirable to employ administrators and counselors who are knowledgeable and talented in the arts and who are able to relate this knowledge and these talents to school management and other support services.

The degree of quality of instruction (Academic and the Arts) relates to the objectives of a given school program and the degree of commitment of the school district to using magnet schools as a means of improving educational opportunities. Three factors related to high-quality education in the Performing and Visual Arts School are: 1. an innovative principal, who is a strong leader in motivating teachers and students with a curriculum developed to maintain their enthusiasm; 2. a magnet theme: a curriculum, teaching methods, and staff capabilities that are very coherent to produce a strong program identity; 3. and some degree of flexibility with regard to district rules, conventions, and procedures (Blank, 1984).

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to ascertain the competencies, experiences and skills desired of administrators and counselors of Performing and Visual Arts Schools.

The survey questionnaires for the Administrators and counselors of Performing and Visual Arts Schools were mailed to 189 schools in the United States (3 in Canada) who were listed in the Network of Performing and Visual Arts Schools, Membership of October, 1987. A total of sixty-four (64) survey instruments were returned in usable form. It is the data from these 64 survey instruments that the following research is reported.

FINDINGS

Administrators:

1. Administrators should have strong management skills and experience.
2. Administrators should have a background in public and community relations and ability in the area of fund raising.
3. Administrators should have a thorough understanding and be acutely cognitive of the academic demands and needs of the Performing Arts student.
4. Administrators should have an involved interest and be keenly aware of the unique artistic needs of the Performing Arts student.

Counselors:

1. Counselors should be academically well trained in order to meet the special academic and emotional needs of Performing

Arts students.

2. Counselors should be professionally prepared for and have experience with individual student counseling techniques and procedures.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study were obtained and reported from the responses of the respondents to the questionnaire, coupled with research of the related literature have provided sufficient evidence to support a number of conclusions. On the basis of the evidence available, the following conclusions are presented for consideration:

1. The major function of Performing and Visual Arts education is to educate not to make the students professional artists.
2. Administrators of the Performing and Visual Arts magnet school should be compassionate and understanding of both academic and artistic needs of young student artists and the teaching artists.
3. Administrators of the Performing and Visual Arts School should have thorough knowledge of and experience in school business management.
4. Administrators of the Performing and Visual Arts School should have expertise in public relations, including gaining the community's support and in raising funds for the school's programs.
5. Counselors of the Performing and Visual Arts School should be specially trained and interested in the academic and emotional needs of students in this specialized school.
6. Counselors of the Performing and Visual Arts School will spend most of their time with individual counseling regarding academic or personal/social concerns rather than artistic considerations.

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